

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2013 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: The Literacy Lab

Application ID: 13ND147703

Program Name: Metro DC Reading Corps

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

Reviewers' Summary Comments:

(+) Strong evidence has been provided that identifies the need of the project in the District of Columbia (D.C.) area. Metro D.C. schools have a low (56%) graduation rate. They are last in K-12 student achievement with an increasing rate of reading deficiency as the students progress through grade levels.

(+) The applicant provided a compelling need for services in the targeted area. The data revealed 60% of third graders were not reading at grade level and by the fourth grade reading failure was 84% vs. 68% nationally. The data also revealed one in five students repeated a grade and only 56% graduated from high school.

(+) The applicant provided a persuasive analysis of the need of this service for the economically disadvantaged. The discussion indicated that by the third grade 61% of economically disadvantaged children scored below grade level in reading.

(+) The applicant describes the roles of the Members as providing one-on-one tutoring for K-3 students for 20 minutes a day with time to track student data. The effectiveness of the program is detailed through highly-trained and scripted personnel and through collaboration with in-school teachers.

(+) The applicant has replicated the Minnesota Reading Corps which is an evidenced-informed AmeriCorps program that has demonstrated measurable community impact and been validated by the United States Education Department as having significant evidence supporting its interventions.

(+) Valid and reliable measures for assessing student growth, use of the AIMS web to administer benchmark assessments three times a year, evidence-informed instructional interventions, strong language and literacy experiences and interventions for reading difficulties, as well as using this data to provide evidence-informed interventions are all part of this application, ensuring the impact of the program and measurement methodology.

(+) The applicant identifies the significant impact of “not” implementing the program and the deleterious impact on the target area. Students who did not receive Reading Corps interventions were three-times more likely to be

referred for special education services (5.4% vs. 1%) by the end of the school year.

(+) The three-year expectations of the applicant are compelling. The three-year projections would provide interventions to 1,875 struggling readers who are on pace to fail the third grade state reading test. The program will be assessed by benchmark testing three times annually to include letter naming, letter sound fluency, oral reading and reading fluency. The final report will be distributed annually to all key stakeholders.